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# Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

**Summary record of the 1st meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 22 February 2007, at 10.30 a.m.

*Temporary Chairman*: Ms. Migiro (Deputy Secretary-General)
*Chairman*: Ms. Ferrari ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.*

**Opening of the session by the Deputy Secretary-General**

1. **The Temporary Chairman** said that she was pleased to speak to the Special Committee so early in her tenure. The decolonization movement was one with which the United Nations was closely identified, and indeed was part of the Organization's founding mission.

2. That quest had gained clear momentum in the early 1960s, with the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the establishment of the Special Committee.

3. Four decades later, decolonization was a United Nations success story, albeit an unfinished one.

4. Today, there were still 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories, in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Thus there clearly remained work to do.

5. The United Nations and the international community had a responsibility to bring about a speedy, successful and sustainable solution for the total eradication of colonialism. And if the Organization was to close that chapter in human affairs, it needed to focus on pragmatic steps.

6. One of the most promising opportunities for progress in the year ahead was the Pacific Territory of Tokelau. Last February, as Special Committee members knew, Tokelau had held a referendum on a measure designed to ensure its attainment of self-government in free association with New Zealand, the administering Power. That referendum had not resulted in the two-thirds majority needed to effect a change in status. Nevertheless, New Zealand and Tokelau had subsequently agreed to move the process forward by holding another referendum in November 2007. That demonstrated the indispensability of political will on the part of the administering Power.

7. She knew Special Committee members shared her hope that the example of Tokelau, and the parties' renewed efforts to hold a referendum, would inspire *other* administering Powers and Territories to move towards self-determination for the peoples in the Territories concerned. Needless to say, the cooperation of the administering Powers would be crucial. They must ensure that the views of the peoples of those Territories were heard. They should take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions. Towards that end, she urged all administering Powers to adopt a constructive attitude. They should do their utmost to muster the political will necessary for implementing the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

8. She commended the Special Committee for its important work, and for its steadfast commitment to the Declaration and the United Nations Charter. As it began its new session, she assured Special Committee members that the Secretariat would continue to fully support their efforts.

**Adoption of the agenda**

9. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Election of officers**

10. *Ms. Ferrari (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) was elected Chairperson, Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) and Mr. Okio (Congo) were elected Vice-Chairpersons, and Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) was elected Rapporteur, by acclamation.*

11. *Ms. Ferrari (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) took the Chair.*

12. **The Chairperson** said that the delegations of Afghanistan, Malaysia, Namibia, Peru, Thailand, Uganda and the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See had indicated their wish to participate as observers in the opening meeting of the Special Committee. She also welcomed Grenada and Timor-Leste to the Special Committee.

13. She expressed her appreciation to the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement and her support, reflecting the commitment to the cause of decolonization at the highest levels of the Secretariat. She also expressed the Special Committee's gratitude to Mr. Hunte and Mr. Severin of Saint Lucia, the former Chairmen of the Committee, for their effective leadership over the past two years.

14. As the Deputy Secretary-General had indicated, there was much unfinished business in the area of decolonization. In order to help the Special Committee discharge its mandate and assist the peoples in the

Non-Self-Governing Territories to achieve self-determination, the Special Committee must continue its work in a proactive, pragmatic, dynamic and innovative manner. That would require better cooperation with the administering Powers, following the example of the cooperation between New Zealand and Tokelau in the process of determining the final status of that Territory. She praised the administering Power's decision to leave the meticulously negotiated referendum package on the table for the November 2007 vote and called on other administering Powers to follow suit and engage in genuine cooperation with the Special Committee.

15. As it was now the seventh year of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the Special Committee must intensify its work to implement the various resolutions and recommendations on decolonization; otherwise, it would have to call for additional decades in which to complete its work.

16. The annual decolonization seminar for 2007 would take place in the Caribbean and would focus on the specific issues pertaining to the Non-Self-Governing Territories in that region and the concerns of representatives of the Territories and the views and positions of experts and academics in that regard.

17. Fully aware of the challenges that lay ahead in moving the Special Committee's agenda forward, she appealed for the support of Special Committee members, the administering Powers and the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

**Organization of work** (A/AC.109/2007/L.1 and L.2)

18. **The Chairperson** drew attention to a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/AC.109/2007/L.1, indicating to the Committee the resolutions and decisions relevant to the work of the Special Committee for the current year. The Committee also had before it for consideration document A/AC.109/2007/L.2, which contained a note by the Chairperson concerning the Committee's organization of the work, programme of work and timetable. Every effort would be made to complete the Committee's work, as scheduled, by 29 June, so that its report could be made available to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. She took it that the Committee wished to approve its proposed organization of work for the current year.

19. *It was so decided.*

20. **Mr. Okio** (Congo) said that the Committee's work would be guided by the content of the Deputy Secretary-General's statement and expressed support for the Chairperson's emphasis on strengthening dialogue and cooperation with the administering Powers.

21. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali) welcomed the election of a Chairperson from a region that had always strongly supported decolonization, as well as the commitment expressed in the statement of the Deputy Secretary-General and General Assembly resolution 61/130, in particular paragraph 10 setting out the Special Committee's continuing mandate.

22. **Mr. Prabowo** (Indonesia) reaffirmed his delegation's full commitment to the early and comprehensive resolution of the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Indonesia had actively supported the First International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and continued to support the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

23. It also supported the proposed organization of work of the Committee and in particular, the increased use of informal meetings to advance the Committee's agenda and implement a constructive programme of work on a case-by-case basis for the Non-Self-Governing Territories (resolution 61/130, para. 5) and resolutions referring to specific Non-Self-Governing Territories. With but a few years remaining in the Second International Decade, his delegation hoped that every effort would be made to ensure the self-determination of those Territories.

24. **Mr. Malmierca Díaz** (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, said that the Committee must complete its mandate of ensuring that all Non-Self-Governing Territories had the right to self-determination; the Secretary-General's note provided useful guidance to that end.

25. **Ms. Joseph** (Saint Lucia) said that in chairing the Committee over the past several years, her delegation had produced a Plan of Implementation of the Decolonization Mandate 2006-2007. The plan provided a comprehensive blueprint for the United Nations system to further the decolonization process in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The plan had been recognized by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/130 as an important legislative authority

for the attainment of self-government for the Territories by the end of 2010.

26. Although the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism would end in 2010, major elements of its plan of action had gone largely unimplemented, especially the studies and analyses on the evolution of self-government in each Territory. Further, the development of the case-by-case workplan for each Territory had effectively stalled, pending the completion of a backlog of reports by the Secretary-General on the implementation of decolonization mandated by the General Assembly each year.

27. In short, the United Nations system had not responded effectively to the mandate with which it had been entrusted. It was not surprising that only Timor-Leste had been decolonized during the 16-year period since the First International Decade.

28. The Special Committee must intensify its efforts with respect to those elements of the Plan of Implementation. Significant progress could be achieved only by taking innovative measures, since the standard method of work had clearly not yielded significant results. Her delegation would support all efforts to address those and other challenges.

29. **Mr. Richardson** (Saint Kitts and Nevis) expressed the hope that completion of the work for the Second International Decade would be a priority of the Bureau and paid tribute to the work of the delegation of Saint Lucia in its many years of chairing the Committee.

30. The implementation of the decolonization process was of particular interest to Saint Kitts and Nevis, a small island developing State in the Caribbean and a former Non-Self-Governing Territory. Prior to its independence, Saint Kitts and Nevis had been constitutionally linked with Anguilla. It still felt particularly strong ties to it and to the other Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean region and attached great importance to their future political development. Saint Kitts and Nevis regarded them as integral to the regional integration movement and was anxious to foster their political and constitutional evolution as well as their economic sustainability.

31. He stressed the urgency of implementing the resolutions on decolonization, and of implementing the decolonization process based on analyses of conditions in the Territories. His delegation looked forward to working with the Chairperson on increasing the information available to Member States on all the Non-Self-Governing Territories in order to help promote their self-determination.

**Other matters**

32. **The Chairperson** said that the Committee would strictly apply the decision of the General Assembly concerning the waiver of a quorum, as it had in previous years. In accordance with that decision, the Committee's meetings would be convened without the presence of the quorum required under rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. However, the presence of a majority of the members would be required for any decision to be taken.

33. As in the past, it was her intention to convene one or two informal meetings of the Special Committee to consider the issues related to the organization of its next regional seminar and the dates of the seminar, as well as the composition of the Committee's delegation to the seminar.

34. Informal consultations on the possible venue and dates of the seminar were still in progress. It was an established practice of the Committee to hold its seminar during the third week of May, which coincided with the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. It was her intention to explore the possibility of holding the 2007 seminar in one of the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean and, if possible, to combine it with a visiting mission to that Territory.

*The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*